

Amendments to the Specification:

Page 16, amend the paragraph beginning at line 10 to read as follows:

In Fig. 4, the purified water introduced into the electrolysis apparatus 105 is branched by a pipe 300, one flow of the branched flows is pressurized to the order of a few tens atm with a pump 301, and is led into a reverse osmosis membrane separator 303 through a flow regulating valve 302. Here, sodium (Na) ion and chloride (Cl) ion are filtered and the treated water becomes a soft water which is pressurized to a few atm with a pump 305 and led into an electrolysis tank 306 through a pipe 304.

Page 16, amend the paragraph beginning at line 20 to read as follows:

In the electrolysis tank 306, the soft water is introduced into the space between diaphragms 307, 308 capable of passing ions, and ~~electrolyzed~~ by supplying electric current from an electric power supply 311 to a positive electrode 309 and a negative electrode 310.

An alkaline aqueous solution enriched in OH ion is generated through the diaphragm 307 in a space 312 around the positive electrode 309, while on the other hand, an acidic aqueous solution enriched in H ion is generated in a space 313 around the negative electrode 310 through the diaphragm 308.

Further, the soft water is sometimes used for preparation of chemicals including polymer agents.

Page 20, amend the paragraph beginning at line 7 to read as follows:

As shown in Fig. 2, the magnetic flocs 24 exfoliated from the membrane are suspended in the vicinity of the water surface, and when the flocs 24 approach, for example, the magnetic generating means constituted with a permanent magnet 35 with a surface magnetic field strength of 0.5 Tesla and a supporting frame 36, the flocs 24 undergo rapid magnetic separation and migrate toward the permanent magnet 35 owing to the external magnetic field gradient formed by the permanent magnet 35. The magnetic flocs 38 that have migrated are attached to the surface of a thin-walled shell 37, made of nonmagnetic stainless steel ~~or~~or a plastic material, moving outside the magnetic field generating means.

Page 21, amend the paragraph beginning at line 4 to read as follows:

As shown in Fig. 3, one end of the shell 37 is jointed to a flange 39, and a rod 40 jointed to the flange 39 is rotated by a motor 41. The rod 40 is supported by the casing 25, maintaining watertight with the aid of an O ring 42 ~~57~~. The motor 41 is fixed to and supported by the casing 25. The other end of the shell 37 is rotatably supported by the casing 27, maintaining watertight with the aid of an O ring-43 ~~58~~, and the interior of the shell 37 is open to the atmosphere. The permanent magnet 35 is fixed to and supported by, with the aid of the supporting frame 38, by the casing 25 with bolts or the like through the intermediary of a bracket 44a from the side of the atmosphere.